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THE
FUNERAL SERMON
OF

JOHN SARNEY, Husbandman,

Preached in the Church of B. 1. 2.,

ON

FEBRUARY 18. 1760.

By JAMES NEALE, M. A. *K*

Head Master of the Royal Grammar School of Henley
upon Thames, and late of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge.



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PRÆMONITION.

I Am requested to print this discourse by those to whose love I am a considerable debtor, and therefore I willingly pay this little testimony of my thankfulness.

This sermon is calculated for a plain country village. It may displease the wise of this world, but a soul, seasoned with the grace of God, will not condemn the day of small things.

The great business of a minister of Christ, is to beseech sinners in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to an offended GOD. He is an ambassador from the king of heaven; he hath a glorious message to deliver of pardon and peace, and life everlasting to a guilty world. The soul that is lost through his fear and negligence, will indeed perish; but the blood of that soul will GOD require at his hand in the day of the Lord Jesus.

This treasure is deposited in earthen vessels, of little strength and value in the sight of the world. But the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord: it is enough that the disciple is as his Master, and the servant as his Lord.

G O D, who mercifully awakened me to think upon these things, hath enabled me to labour more earnestly in his vineyard, I trust to his glory, and the spiritual advantage of myself and others.

This, as usual, hath plunged me into many temporal distresses, and persecutions for Christ's sake; and nothing less than destruction to me and my children is hourly menaced and pronounced.

But I beseech these men, by the mercies of God, if there is any love, any truth, any peace in religion, to calmly weigh things temporal; and things eternal, in the balance of the sanctuary; and then censure, if they can, those who call mankind off from the vanities of time to the riches of eternity.

If they disbelieve the soul's immortality, which I strongly suspect, they must grant it surely to be a desirable truth; and therefore let them humbly approach, with earnest prayer,
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the Father of lights, and they will hear the voice of truth affirm——they cannot kill the soul.

If they seek truth, and proclaim themselves error's antagonists, let not the search after one, nor the opposition to the other, hurry them into words and actions; I say, not unworthy of a christian, but of a gentleman of commonsense or common honesty. And this advice reaches with treble strength the character of a clergyman.

If they are abundantly convinced of any dangerous tendency, to disturb the public tranquility, of any infamous actions, of any impiety in word or deed, as they too zealously, and, I think, uncharitably affirm concerning us; let them bring forth their strong reasons, and, thro' the grace of GOD, a calm and plenary confutation shall be produced.

Many months ago, a person by accident, present at our usual family devotions, desired permission to attend them constantly, which was granted. Others applied, obtained leave, and came.

More and more continued to press upon me to hear the word of GOD; and can any man forbid them? I have used such lights as
are

are in my power to discover any thing unlawful, seditious, or hurtful, by such a permission, and I have not been able. Since, therefore, much real good hath visibly flowed from this custom, I dare not drop it for the clamour and charge of an imaginary evil.

If I have not a right to permit even five hundred neighbours to come to my own house, to family prayers, in a quiet, peaceable manner, pity my well-meant mistake, and set me right. But by what law of GOD, of reason, or of Great Britain, will you proceed?

I now return my humble and sincere acknowledgments to those worthy persons, who have espoused my righteous cause, and who have not been ashamed of me, or of the gospel for which I suffer; more especially to that venerable and learned man Dr. H. who has been a father to me in a thousand instances. O may my GOD remember them for good, who will not let a cup of cold water, given in his blessed Son's name, to one of his disciples, pass unrewarded in eternity.





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REVELATIONS xxi. 4.

And there shall be no more death.

I.

AIL blessed prophecy! In God's
due time mayest thou be fulfilled in
us! Death makes sufficient havock
here, but hereafter he shall be no
more—His reign expires—He ceases to put
all things under his feet—The last enemy is de-
stroyed.—And man appears in a vesture of
immortality.

II.

II.

This is the portion only of those who love God, who keeping their Saviour's saying, never taste of death.

III.

Then shall all tears be * wiped away.—Lo feed time is past, and the summer with all its variety of hopes and fears is gone, and harvest is come, and the voice of joy and health is in the dwelling of the righteous, he arrives at the new Jerusalem, having the glory of God, where the Almighty giveth light, and begins his everlasting reign.

IV.

Where is admittance to tears, when the bitterness of death is past, and sorrow, crying, and pain, are no more; and former things are passed away.

* The original word, *ἐξαιλεῖσθαι*, gives us an exquisitely beautiful and just idea of the future state of the blessed. The soul shall then be cleansed from all those impurities which have besmeared and defiled it, during its residence in the body. (See *αλαρε* in Xenop. and Thucyd.) and the debt of sin being wholly expunged, it is free from bondage for ever. This state is begun here, and compleated in eternity.

V.

The word || Sorrow denotes that peculiar grief caused by present separation from valuable persons. — But in those immortal habitations we shall meet them again, and be for ever companions of the same felicity. — § The shouts of ungodly men, their cries and evil clamours that wound our ears, in this trying hour, will be exchanged for the songs of angels, and the praises of a glorious and merciful God. — Labour and travail, and pain and weariness, and all the bondage of a sinful body, will be at an end. — They are all swallowed up in victory, and the triumphs of glory remain undisturbed for evermore.

VI.

* A wife heathen may comfort us by presenting to view the ruins of ancient and famous cities; by shewing empires in the dust, and seek to divert us from private sorrow, by the sight of public calamities, and examples of huge vicissitude, it is enough, for a christian

|| Πενθος.

§ Κεκυνη. Vide Acts xxiii. 9.

* This refers to a well-known letter of consolation to Marcus Tullius Cicero.

B

in

in his afflictions to consider that death shall be no more — Risen with **CHRIT**, from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, he is ever holy, ever happy, ever longing to be with his Saviour. — O blessed is he that hath part in this first resurrection, for on him the second death shall have no power.

VII.

You see then, what argument of consolation I propose to set before you upon this occasion. Wherefore let us implore the presence of that holy spirit, which fills the vessels of grace and mercy, making them meet for a crown undefiled and which fadeth not away, that our understandings, being enlightened and every cloud of unbelief remov'd, like Moses, from the top of Pisgah, we may now be able to discern that promised land, the heavenly Canaan, the lot of our inheritance.

VIII.

Who is blind, but the Sinner? Who beholds and enjoy's light, but the saints in **CHRIST**? If in this life only, we have hope in **CHRRIT**, of all men we are most miserable, for then we foolishly suffer reproaches, persecutions, and distresses. — But the Spirt of God itself witnesseth, that afflictions abide us. — Yet this is a

fair

fair and goodly heritage. — For Grace exercised by suffering is an earnest of glory, which glory stedfastly beheld, causes none of these things to move us. Neither count we life dear unto ourselves so that we may finish our course with joy, testifying the gospel of the grace of God.

IX.

That death shall be no more is clear and certain. Indeed, doubt in such an important point would be unworthy of the majesty and goodness of God.—He hath therefore abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the blessed Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; and for this cause we suffer gladly, nevertheless we are not ashamed, knowing whom we have believed, and are persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day.

X.

Because I live, ye shall live also.—These are the words of our only Master and SAVIOUR dying for us.—And he that heareth his words and believeth on him that sent him hath everlasting life, and shall never come into condemnation.—For Christ is the resurrection and the life, and he that believeth in him tho' he were dead before in trespasses and sins, yet

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shall he live the life of the Son of God, who is his ransom and his redeemer, and shall stand by * Faith at the solemn appearance of the just and of the unjust.

XI.

But the wonderful works and miracles of our blessed Lord bear witness to him that he was indeed sent to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of the true Israel of God, even of his chosen people. — The certainty therefore of our future inheritance, stands on everlasting foundations, on the word of an immutable being, and that word confirmed by miracles, and those miracles witnessed by simple undesigning men, who sealed their testimony with their own blood. — O let me dye the death of the righteous and my latter end be like his, for he finds peace at the last, and amid the pangs of a dissolving body is full of immortality.

XII.

And so the prophets of old — — God will destroy in this mountain, even by CHRIST, the face of the covering, even every sinful work,

* Verily. But by what faith? That which is known by the fruit of inward and outward holiness.

and

and the veil, the spiritual blindness, that is spread over all nations, shall be taken away. He will, * swallow up, as a lion his prey the monster death for ever, and adorn eternity with victories and triumphs, the triumphs of divine mercy that shall fill the bosoms of just men perfected, with songs of everlasting love; and then shall all our tears be wiped away, no room will be found for melancholy sighs but calm delights shall be our portion and our lot, and the rebuke of God's people, the scandal of the cross, shall be at an end. — The word cannot pass away, for the LORD hath spoken it — And beholding in that hour God face to face, it shall be said, lo, this is || our GOD we have waited for him, he is || our SAVIOUR; this is Jehovah we have waited

* כָּלַע so this word is used metaphorically, vide Cartw. in loc. — for ever. *eis το τέλος* according to the LXX. the word signifies also victory. So St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. Death is swallowed up in victory.

|| This assurance is begun in the soul on earth. The sight is now through a glass, darkly, *εν αινιγματι*, as St. Paul: but then *πρὸς ὁπλον πρὸς ὁπλον*. The collect of our church for the Epiphany admirably describes it. Mercifully grant that we which know THEE NOW by Faith, may after this life have fruition of thy glorious Godhead through Jesus Christ our Lord.

for

for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his Salvation for ever.

XIII.

These precious promises not only attend the righteous here, but they follow them into their * separated state, and the prisoners of hope hear the word which is Almighty, say, I will ransom them from the power of the || grave, I will redeem them from death, Where are thy plagues O death? Where O grave thy destruction? and is the purpose to be changed? —Behold the word of the Lord! repentance of this promise shall be hid from mine eyes.

XIV.

Finally these promises, seal our inheritance with eternal love, so that when this corruptible puts on incorruption; when this spirit is clothed upon, and mortality swallowed up of life, when the ransomed return, and come to

* It means, that life and immortality are secured to us by the immutability of God, whether on earth, in hades, or in heaven.

|| **HIN** is well known to signify the separated state of souls. The Greek interpreters usually render it Hades. The Latin Inferi.

Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, when they obtain joy and gladness, and when, together with this heaven and earth, all their attendant sorrows flee away: they know that they shall be for ever with the LORD. No death shall separate them from God, no sin shall defile them, no danger affright them, no darkness shall surround them, but they will shine as suns in the kingdom of their father and be as the stars for ever and ever.

XV.

While then we have any being we will praise God.—For we run not as uncertainly, we fight not as one that beateth the air; now we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, wherefore comfort ye one another with these words.

XVI.

Thus sure and certain our immortality, let us next explore the glorious qualities of that blessed state which more abundantly confirm that sentence of consolation, blessed are the dead that die in the LORD, for they enter by faith into an eternal sabbath, and their works do follow them.—This is the blessed region, the
rest

rest that remaineth for the people of God. This is the refreshing comfortable abiding city where the weary feet of sojourners and pilgrims taste a sweet repose. The weather-beaten vessel, long the sport of winds and waves, now finds an end of noise and tumult, and gains the desired port.—The stranger long buffeted with wrongs and tormented with evil violence, unholy customs, and the language of aliens from God, salutes his home, his heavenly native country, dwells in his Father's house, and hears and sings the song of Moses and of the Lamb for ever.—It is our joy that this peace of God surpasses human description eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither can the heart of man conceive it. It is enough that we shall see God as he is face to face. O let us not dispute the glorious truth, but quit ourselves like men who look for the coming of the LORD—ye blind and deaf, ye slow of heart to believe all that CHRIST and his apostles have spoken, can any misery be like yours who neither see nor hear nor have faith in that, which unseen unheard and disbeliev'd must plunge your souls into everlasting darkness?

XVII.

O blessed joy ! gracious privilege ! heart-reviving comfort ! death no longer is showering down fears and terrors upon our devoted heads.—His sting is plucked out.—Christ hath changed his form, and destroyed his kingdom, and grace hath disarmed him of all his strength, so that death and time are only the golden doors of life and immortality. — This life is in truth the seed-time of the saints, they sow in tears, but it is the good seed of glory, which he that beareth to the grave shall doubtless at the resurrection come again and reap with joy, bearing his good sheaves with him to that solem harvest, where angels are the reapers, the righteous are the wheat, and the wicked the chaff to be burnt in unquenchable fire.

XVIII.

The very ground is cursed for sinful man's sake, and thorns and briars, cares and sorrows, are all its produce.—Labour and diligence, fear and trembling, are therefore required to work out our salvation, to make our calling and

election sure. And lest we should be faint and weary, the Captain of that salvation is perfected, through sufferings, and the way to heaven is the way of the Cross, and to suffer for him, is to reign with him, and the fruits of sin appear every where around us, and life is a warfare and a battle, and the conqueror dies before he can receive his crown of glory, and all this is a circle of mercies, and a wonder of providence, and a reversion of our sentence. Our pardon is secure, and the terms are gracious, and the yoke easy, and his commandments are not grievous. Yet to be dissolved and to be with CHRIST is far better than our presence in this mortal body. Hence the saints sigh, Oh that I had wings like a dove for then would I fly away and be at rest! If the person is happy, the place is miserable, the world is carnal, sinners contradict and persecute us, the way is narrow, and our fight, through a glass darkly; so that to a prepared soul, § death

§ The argument is this.

There is a future happy eternal state.

This state is proved to be clear and certain, and replete with joy.

Therefore

is a consummation most devoutly to be wish'd for.

XIX.

Forasmuch then, as it hath pleased Almighty God, to take unto himself the soul of our dear departed brother, our solid comfort concerning him is that being numbered among the children of God, he has now his lot among the saints. — As for us who remain it is enough that God hath declared himself to be a father of the fatherless, and to plead the widow's cause, even God in his holy habitation.

XX.

A good Father, a tender husband, an industrious, honest servant, a friendly neighbour, a faithful subject, are all amiable and valuable characters. — These belonged to our friend,

Therefore we ought not fruitlessly to lament those who are gone thither before us, but to long ourselves and to be with CHRIST, yet running with patience and resignation the race set before us. This is now applied to the deceased.

and need we wonder that the possessor of them when he dies is lamented, and his grave bedew'd with tears, and his coffin followed, not with expensive hypocrisy, and the pomp of invited mourners, but with a silent train of those who give a willing testimony of his virtues.—But how did our deceased Brother judge of these virtues ——— When I attended him in his last hours, he saw himself an unprofitable servant. — He saw the corruption of the human heart, and its distance from original righteousness. He saw that sinful nature deserved only the wrath of God. He lay therefore with earnest cries and petitions for pardon at the foot of the throne of mercy, confessing thereby that great scripture truth taught in our Church that we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST by faith and not by our own works or deservings; and I trust in God his prayer is heard, and his sorrow now turned into joy, and that he shall taste of death no more.

XXI.

Works are only acceptable to God, as they are the fruit of faith in our LORD JESUS CHRIST. The good tree of faith beareth necessarily good fruit, if it beareth not, it is cut down, and cast into the fire.—Does this make void the law? does this set aside the * necessity of good works? God forbid; yea, we stablish the law; yea, we press the universal obedience of heart and life to the will of God.

XXII.

—He that doeth evil, he that committeth sin is of the devil, whose works he does; he is not born of God. Can there be a more weighty argument than this, to fly from all sin, and pursue holiness without which no man can see the LORD.

* In what respect necessary? 1. That our light may shine before men, that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven. 2. To shew that our faith is alive; we perform the free service of God. Faith is the gift of God. A precious talent an heavenly plant. Is it buried? Take it away, is it barren? Is it dead? cut it down, why doth it cumber the ground?

XXIII.

XXIII.

Thus the divine assertion, that there shall be no more death, appears to be a great argument of consolation to us concerning our departed brother.—And since this is the true state of things——since there is a good land, flowing with milk and honey. — Since we are now passing through the barren wilderness of human life in our way thither—Since that way is narrow, difficult, and opposite to flesh and blood, and pointed out only to a few nations.——Since the far greater part of those to whom this living, true way is declared, wilfully reject it to wander about in errors and vanity, and enter not into that rest because of unbelief: what remains but to take heed to ourselves, lest a promise being left us of entering into this rest of the Almighty, any of us should seem to come short of it.—What remains, but to beseech you brethren by the mercies of GOD in CHRIST JESUS our LORD to consider these things, to examine yourselves, to look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of GOD, lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble your own souls

souls and defile others, lest there be any fornicator, or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of this world's profit, sold his blessed birth-right.

XXIV.

On what shallow foundations do deceived souls build their hopes of eternal happiness? They love, they practice abominable sins. It is enough for them that—God is merciful—Divine justice will not punish sins of time, with eternal misery.——When death comes, repentance is time enough.——I speak of replies to the first whisperings of conscience.——But oh, miserable comfort! into what a depth of anguish for ever shall these delusions plunge mankind? —— The word of God is, Except a man be born of water, and of the holy spirit, he cannot be saved. That holy gracious gift purchased for us by CHRIST, and given by our heavenly Father to those who ask him in his son's name. This mercy, this love of God, causes us to die to sin, and to live unto righteousness, and to be no longer conformed to
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the world, but to be transformed in the renewing of your minds. If mercy is the cordial of repentance, it is also frequently a snare of the adversary to create presumption. And as our souls are immortal, as it is appointed for all men only once to die, it is contrary to reason, and the express word of God, that the state of soul in which death finds us should afterwards be changed, we then enter upon an unalterable condition and the wicked like the rebellious angels will be reserved for the blackness and darkness for ever. — Finally to sin now, to hazard present salvation for the chance of to-morrow, carries such strong marks of folly with it that it demands grief, but needs not confutation.

XXV.

But how many bring an ill report upon this good land, or deny its reality? And what can I say to awaken them. — O most merciful God, whose compassions fail not, take pity upon thy miserable creatures. They are thine, let them not perish. O deliver them

for

for thy great Name's Sake ! Thou delightest not in the death of a sinner, but hadst rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live ; turn us, O good Lord ! and so shall we be turned. Be favourable unto us. O remember thine everlasting covenant. Behold, such was thy love to a sinful world, that thou didst send thine only Son JESUS CHRIST to the end that all that believe on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Is there one in this place that shall then perish ? Is there a sinner who refuses to come to the Saviour, to the friend of sinners ? Is there death that scorns life ? Sicknes that spurns health away ? Labour and weariness that will not hear and behold the voice of reason, of rest and peace ? L O R D, if there are such, behold they are those to whom thou art sent, O quicken them with thy spirit, awake, awake, put on strength lest the heathen say, where is now their God ?

XXVI.

You are pleas'd to hear of an heavenly place, but the moment you are told, If a man do not deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me he cannot be my disciple, you are offended—Nay, but O man, who art thou? Shall the clay say to the potter, why hast thou formed me thus? Are not the things which are highly esteemed amongst men, an abomination in the sight of God? Behold you are a fallen creature. You are called upon to arise, and confess your sins, and repent, then you will find that God is faithful, and just, to forgive your sins, according to his promise, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. O despise not that holy way, which a suffering SAVIOUR hath sanctified, and which the joyful feet of confessors and Martyrs have trod with fortitude before us.

XXVII

XXVII.

But, consider seriously, of whose law is sin the transgression? Is it not of the law of a God, great in justice, great in power, great in holiness? And what is the transgressor? A worm. And this sinful worm is called to pardon, life, adoption and immortality. And behold, to all its other wickedness, this yet is added, that it will not obey the call, it is displeased with the means to such a glorious end; it treasures up wrath against the great day of wrath and indignation, and it goeth on sinning against mercy, sinning against patience, and worse than all the rest, sinning against the light. — The narrowness of the way, the straitness of the gate, the greatness of religious difficulties arise from ourselves, and not from divine wisdom whose ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace; and who will remove every obstacle, if we run with patience the race set before us.

XXVIII.

And now thanks be to God for his unspeakable mercy, of which ye are witnesses, who believe in these things, a blessed remnant of grace, to whom it is given to receive a sure and certain hope of eternal life, which hope is laid up for you in heaven. Your peace the world knoweth not, for your life is hid with CHRIST in God, you are come unto the Mount Sion, unto the city of the everliving God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where shall be no more death nor agony, nor pain, but love, and holy transport for evermore. There is your treasure, and there will be your hearts.—There the wicked cease from troubling; the voice of the oppressor is no longer heard. Let patience then have its perfect work; abide in CHRIST, and pray that you may bring forth much fruit as knowing the grace of God in truth.

XXIX.

And now let us beg of God that we may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that we may walk worthy of the Lord and be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, giving thanks unto God who hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Let us call upon him that all here may be delivered from the power of darkness and be translated into the kingdom of his dear Son; having redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins. And thus knowing the love of CHRIST that passeth knowledge, let us comprehend, O God, with all saints, what is the length, and breadth, and height, and depth, of thy redeeming mercy to mankind; O let us fight the good fight of faith, in the midst of a wicked world; O let us be content to suffer thankfully thy blessed will; let us rejoice evermore; let us pray without ceasing; let us walk in the perfect

fect liberty of thy Children, O God, and finally receive the end of our faith, even that blessed crown of immortality laid up for those who are redeemed with the precious blood of CHRIST; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the HOLY GHOST in the unity of one Godhead, now and for evermore. Amen.

Now, dear Reader, these things are

I. true, or

II. false.

I. Are they true? Dost thou lead a life agreeable to such truths? Is thy light burning? Dost thou fly from wrath to come?

II. Are they false, chimerical and mere human inventions? Why then account us mad and fools indeed. But, art thou sure they are false, art thou certain that man dieth as a beast, and that there is no hell hereafter? It is impossible for thee, on this side the grave to obtain such certainty. How unwise then art thou towards thyself, to live in sin, how cruel art thou towards thy fellow creature to injure him for believing

lieving in those things which for ought thou knowest to the contrary may be true, and if they should be true must doom thee to a miserable eternity.



F I N I S.



ERRATUM. Page 8. In the note, line 1. for *εξαλειψ*,
read *εξαλειψει*.

Distance from the press must by the candid reader be admitted as an excuse for some few other mistakes of the press.

living in those things which for ought they
known to the contrary be true, and if they
should be true and in fact to a mistake



FINIS

Exhaustum. Page 2. In the note, line 1, for *exhaustum*,
read *exhaustum*.
Distance from the great wall by the canal reader be advised
and as an example for some few other mistakes of the press.

